

LIFE
OF
JOHN FOSTER.

JOHN FOSTER, the celebrated essayist, was born on the 17th September, 1770, in a small farmhouse in the parish of Halifax, between Wainsgate and Hebden Bridge. His parents were John and Ann Foster, a worthy couple, who in addition to the labours of the farm devoted part of * their time to weaving. John was an old-fashioned child. Before reaching his twelfth year he had, to quote his own words, "a painful sense of an awkward but entire individuality." His early antipathies were strong, and his imagination intensely vivid. He was soon set to work to aid his parents in weaving, and till his fourteenth year worked at spinning wool to a thread by the hand-wheel. While thus employed, however, he "had no idea of being permanently engaged in handicraft; * he was ambitious, and secretly indulged in romantic dreams for the future. At the age just named he entered into the service of a master manufacturer, but his inveterate habit of mental abstraction led him constantly to live in an ideal world, and as his weaving in consequence was often executed in a slovenly and unworkmanlike style. his employer was dissatisfied, and discharged him from th service.